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CAUSE UNKNOWN.

Few things now a days are taken for granted. Almost all Englishmen have access to some Encyclopedia, a very large number possess an *Inquire Within*, or *The Reason Why*, to which works they are continually referring for information upon subjects which our ancestors were quite content to accept as facts. They thought a cow was so called to distinguish her from a horse; we are not happy unless we can trace the derivation of the word to some barbaric language of the remote past. We discover that *gov* was the Palaeozoic for stars; that probably those stars were in the Milky-way; that *g* and *v* stand in that ancient tongue for *c* and *w*; and the connection between the Milky-way and a *gov* or cow is obvious. That settled, our cream has an additional flavour.

An unfortunate child who observes that the kettle boils, runs a narrow risk of being told 'the kettle does not boil, but the water inside it,' and of having a lecture upon heat, radiation, evaporation, and so forth, administered upon the spot; and when Molly the housemaid is rushing off to the cellar during a thunder-storm, we stop her with the information, that when she *sees* a flash of lightning, it has passed, and she is safe from its effects.

But, after all, the few particles of knowledge we have acquired are but as 'grains of sand picked up on the sea-shore;' and the highest privilege which can be attained by philosophic study is the power of catching a glimpse at the infinity of our ignorance. He is a short-sighted man who repines at this. Alexander's ennui, when he boo-hooed because he had won the champion's belt, and no one would fight him for it, would be nothing to his who had conquered all the secrets of nature; the sage who knew everything would be no better off than the fool who knows nothing, just as he who possesses a riddle-book full of conundrums, of which he knows the answers, is in the same position, so far as his own private delectation goes, with the man who has no riddle-book at all.

I must own, however, that it is irritating to the

human mind to dwell for long on any perceptible effect without being able to assign any cause for it. Now, there is that bewildering mariner's compass; why, O why will that needle always turn to the north? If the magnet had existed a century or two ago, and had now lost its efficacy, no amount of evidence would have persuaded us that there ever had been such a thing; if it were recently discovered, and there were only one compass extant, we might declare the effect due to sleight of hand or diabolic agency. But when we navigate the world by its aid, when every poet alludes to its fidelity (I do not know why; a pointer is not generally considered 'faithful' to a partridge), and when we wear it on our watch-chains, it is pushing scepticism beyond rational limits to doubt its existence. Yes, I am afraid there is no denying the fact, that a needle rubbed with a loadstone, and nicely balanced, will point to the north, though why it should do so, science cannot at present tell us. It is true that folks talk gravely about the 'magnetic current,' but they might just as well talk about a magnetic gooseberry, for they have not the slightest idea what they mean.

There is another dreadfully unintelligible fact, how does the electric fluid find its way unguided from Liverpool back to London? That a piece of zinc and a piece of copper put into acidulated water, and connected with a wire, should cause a decomposition of the water; that the zinc should at once resolve itself into a positive, and the copper into a negative pole, and that a current of electricity should immediately commence flowing along the wire from the former to the latter—these are abstract facts which the mind can receive without discomfort; nor is there any reason why the wire should not be long enough to go round by Liverpool, or to Melbourne, for that matter, and after leaving the positive pole, take the electric fluid round the world, before it returned to the negative pole, within a few inches from it: but that, if you break off the wire at Liverpool, and bury the end in the ground, and also bury in the same way the end attached to the negative pole under the battery in London, the electric fluid should find its way back through the

earth alone unguided from wire to wire, is a mystery which to my mind is almost awful. There must be hundreds of return currents crossing and recrossing each other underground, how is it they never interfere with one another, or lose their way, or become amalgamated, or blow up, and make lightning?

What causes laughter? I go to a theatre to see a pantomime. The well-known countryman passes over the stage with his basket of country produce. I know what the clown is about to do: he is going to steal a lump of butter out of that basket; he will then smell it, and lick it, accompanying this somewhat unrefined action with much winking of the eyes, and other inelegant pantomimic action typical of greedy delight; then he will make a slide with it on the boards, whereupon a policeman will enter, and tumble down. I have seen all this a hundred times, and it all happens as experience taught me to expect. Why should the muscles of my face become convulsed? Why should I expel the breath from my lungs in gusts and bursts, instead of inhaling and exhaling in a rational manner? That this physical phenomenon should occur when the mind is affected by ludicrous ideas, is curious enough, but that it should be excited by the clown's nonsense is incomprehensible. I have no sympathy with dishonesty, gluttony, or mischief. If I saw a policeman in real life tumble down, I should not feel amused; fear lest he should be hurt, and a desire to help him up, would be my only emotions. What is there, then, to tickle me in the scenic representation of such an accident?—Why, again, should one sometimes be compelled to smile when one is really sorry, and particularly anxious to look duly mournful? If you have never experienced this, reader, be grateful, and do not condemn your less fortunate fellow-creatures as hard-hearted and unfeeling. There are many persons who could no more recount the details of any very dreadful and calamitous event, which was not absolutely personal to themselves or their auditors, without grinning, than they could feel any real amusement in the matter. They are as sorry as the gravest, they are beyond measure vexed with themselves for their unseasonable mirth, but the more shocked others seem by their levity, the less are they able to restrain it.

Crying, again, is even a more mysterious action than laughing. Every human being is a pump, from which it is easy enough to get water when it is new, but as it grows older, the springs dry up, and the well must be sunk deeper. It generally requires an Artesian bore to get a drop out of a man of sixty, unless, of course, he is a judge. That, by the by, is another insoluble problem: Why do judges retain the power of being 'visibly affected' longer than other men?

Why do dogs turn round and round before they settle to sleep? Why do hostlers hiss while cleaning their horses, and paviors cry 'Humph!' with each fall of the rammer? Why do Americans talk through their noses, and mispronounce English? Why do people kiss?

There is a rolling fire of small-arms for you; now comes a big gun.

What causes dreams? Endless are the theories which have been started on this subject, any one of which may be true, as all may be false. But I must take this opportunity of contradicting a

theory which is embraced by many, that all dreams occur at the instant of waking, for I have listened to persons carrying on broken conversations in their sleep for full a quarter of an hour at a time, and their slumber has been sound and deep at the time, as, on more than one occasion which I can remember, the dreamer has sat up, pointed to imaginary objects, and laughed aloud, without waking.

All the facts alluded to above are evident to our senses, though we are at a loss how to account for them; but there are also a vast multitude of doubtful effects, for which no causes can be assigned, floating about the world, so few of which have any real existence, out of the imaginations of mankind, that many scientific minds have acquired the habit of scouting the idea of believing anything on evidence which they cannot account for; and when the clever ones are put in the wrong, which happens occasionally, ignorance and superstition receive an accession of strength, which shews the philosophers that they should beware of dogmatism.

For example, the old women of Switzerland were accustomed to administer the ashes of burned sponge as a remedy for goitre; and a physician to whose knowledge this came, analysed the substance, and finding nothing which could act as an antidote to the complaint, pronounced the whole affair to be quackery. 'Burned sponge cure goitre!' cried the medical world. 'Pooh!'—'But they say that several patients have derived benefit from it.'—'They say, indeed! Who says? What medical man has adopted the treatment and watched its effects? Why, my dear sir, it is impossible: Dr Test has analysed the supposed remedy, and; &c.' Future inquiries and experiments proved, however, that some sponges did, when burned, deposit iodine, which is a very active agent in the cure of goitre; so that when the old women had the luck to hit upon an efficient sponge, they were right enough, and produced a real effect, of which their too rashly-spurned medicine was the actual cause.

No doubt, however, it is highly necessary to limit the field of human inquiry somewhat, by taking some pains to ascertain the positive existence of alleged phenomena, before we set to work to discover the agency which produces them. I therefore entirely dismiss from my catalogue of Unknown Causes all such mysteries as the bad-luck attending enterprises commenced on Friday, or the fatality which dogs a party of thirteen on leaving a dinner-table. With regard to the first of these fast-decaying superstitions, almost every day in the week has been considered the unlucky one by some age or nation, so that a lazy man might find a good excuse for never doing anything at all. And as to the latter, when we consider that the days of man are threescore years and ten, of which the majority of guests at a dinner-party have already spent twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty, not to mention those who have passed the allotted span; that we ride in small-pox hospital cabs, in railway trains, and on bucking and rearing horses; that we shoot, eat mushrooms, take voyages, &c., I think that we must own the first man who discovered that it was at all extraordinary that one out of thirteen mortals assembled together should die in the course of the year, to have been a most ingenious person.

There is, however, another class of apocryphal effects attributed to apparently inadequate causes,

which, perhaps, ought not to be dismissed with such cavalier abruptness. Take, for instance, the wart mystery. Who does not know some one, who has known some one, who once heard of some one who had warts on his or her fingers; who went to a gipsy; who was directed to put as many stones into a bag as he or she had warts, and throw it over a wall; and who, complying with these directions, was suddenly relieved from the discomfort? The candid inquirer who endeavours to sift this evidence is met by many difficulties, it is true. Did the gipsy touch the warts? or rub them, or prick them? How long was it after the incantation before the warts disappeared? Had any ordinary remedies been applied previously? Is it in the nature of warts to go away of themselves? As you question, the fact slips, like the objects of your research, from between the fingers. But there ought to be some method, surely, of coming at the truth with so many living witnesses as there must be. Would not some senatorial reader be so kind as to move for a committee to report upon the matter? The time of M.P.s is often occupied in more futile and far less amusing investigations; and now that the corn-laws are finally done with, why should not the cognate matter of warts engage some portion of the public attention?

The present writer would gladly save the public purse by devoting himself to the thorough sifting of this affair, were it not that his energies have been lately exhausted by the endeavour to get to the bottom of another semi-superstition, the custom, namely, of sticking the poker up against the bars to revive an expiring fire. The custom originated, I believe, in the idea that fairies were putting the fire out, and that the sign of the cross made by the poker resting perpendicularly against the horizontal bars charmed them away. That was a poetical and not irrational fancy, perfectly legitimate and respectable, for fairies are beings which we know nothing whatever about, and might be subject to mysterious laws which do not affect ourselves. But of the thousands and tens of thousands who practise this rite at the present day, very few believe in fairies, and many prefer to stick the poker through an ornamental part of the grate, *below* the bars, where it does not make any form of the cross at all. My first inquiry, therefore, was as to how the effect was produced, and the answers I received were far from satisfactory. Some drew my attention to the sensible improvement in the burning of the fire, produced by inserting the poker under the lower bar, gently raising the coals, and leaving it there; as if there were any analogy between an act which gives the fire the vital air for want of which it is expiring, and one which does not alter the position of the coals. Others appealed to the effect of holding a newspaper before the fireplace; though how a bar of iron, which does not shut up any part of the grate, is to cause the furnace-blast, which is produced by excluding the air from the top, and forcing it to rush in through a contracted space below, they left it to my unaided imagination to determine. Other and wiser perpendicular poker-fire-revivers declined to account in any way for the practice of their irrational rite. They confessed that the *modus operandi* was an entire mystery, but contended that constant experience had convinced them of the fact. Now, this placed the question at once in my catalogue of Unknown Causes, so I saw

that the first step to be taken was to ascertain whether the effects asserted were real or imaginary; and this, as far as I could determine, was the result of my observations: A fire having burned very low, the person desirous of reviving it clears out the dead cinders which are choking it at the bottom, breaks up and gently raises the mass, which has been baked into a solid cake, throws in perhaps a lucifer or two, and then sets up the magic poker. Sometimes a dense smoke arises from the smouldering embers, the gases ignite, a flame bursts out, and the fire burns up; whereupon the operator ignores the real causes which have led to the desired result, and points with triumph to his fetiche. Sometimes a lack of skill or inflammable gas causes the experiment to fail, and then 'the fire has gone too far,' but the faith in the charm remains. Now, it is my honest belief, founded upon much personal observation and experience, that precisely similar results will happen if the poker is allowed to rest quietly in the fender. It is the old story of giving a sick man a dose and an amulet, and attributing his recovery, not to the medicine, but the charm.

Although writing anonymously, I shudder at my rashness in penning this opinion, knowing as I do the anger which it will excite in many believers in the poker, and reflecting upon the formidable instrument which they love to handle. Let me hasten to appease them with what, if their theory be true, will be a most valuable suggestion: let them have their grates made with a bar of iron crossing the others perpendicularly in front, or underlying the bottom, according to their peculiar idiosyncrasy—they can have both, if they desire to make assurance doubly sure—and then their chimneys must always 'draw' well. Who knows? Perhaps their fires would become vestal, and never go out!

ON BOARD THE HULKS.

WE all know the horror with which the French spoke, during the long war, of the English 'pontons,' on board of which their countrymen who had become our prisoners were confined, and how Napoleon wrought upon this dread of the 'water-prisons' of Pitt whenever any portion of the globe had to be 'cleansed of the hideous presence of the English leopards.' Are we to rank this abuse of the hulks with the fictions, extravagant enough some of them, which were current against England in those days, and which, to be just, had their parallels here?—with, for example, the bales of infected cotton thrown on the French coast, 'in order that,' in the words of the official journal, 'unconquerable by the sword, we may be assailed by the plague.' Or, on the other hand, with the poisoning, by the French, of the New River. Harsh treatment of prisoners of war, with no crime against them but that of serving their country, would be defended by no one. Did such treatment exist? That it did, is to this day believed, rightly or wrongly, by the large majority of the French. Here follows a summary of the narration by a sufferer who passed nearly nine years on board the hulks. M. Louis Garneray, the author himself, as we shall afterwards see, a painter, came of a family of artists. His father studied under David, and his brother, a pupil of Isabey's, wrought for the Empress Josephine, and gave lessons to Queen Hortense. Louis also began to study under his father, but at

thirteen years of age, determined to travel in search of fortune. He went to sea with a relative, and served on board a dozen different vessels, met with no end of adventures, was engaged in active warfare, and got shipwrecked several times in various parts of the world. With this brief introduction, let M. Garneray tell his own story.

The *Pinson*, a coasting cutter, of which I was captain, had been taken by the English in the roadstead of Saint Denis, Île de Bourbon, and I had just managed to escape being taken prisoner. There I was at Saint Denis, without employment, without money, discouraged, and worn out by nine years' adventures and hardships. A frigate was on the point of returning to France; I asked permission to embark, and, on the 30th August 1805, I slung my hammock on board the *Atlanta*. I had reckoned without my host: a terrible storm overtook us near the Cape of Good Hope, our frigate went to pieces on the coast, and I barely escaped with my life. The men of the *Atlanta* were put on board other ships; I was transferred to the *Belle Poule*, one of a squadron which was to cruise on the west coast of Africa, to look out for the English slavers. One night, it was the 13th March 1806, we made out three sail which were bearing down on us. The night was very dark, but we could see that the largest of the three vessels signalled to the others, which we soon lost sight of. The big one was the *London*, a three-decker, with 104 guns; she engaged with the *Marengo* and the *Belle Poule*. We were getting the best of it, when the rest of the English squadron came up. They were better sailers than we, and by noon the *Belle Poule* was placed between the fires of the *Amazon* and the *Ramillies*. The *Marengo*, surrounded by several vessels, had already struck its colours, and we were obliged to surrender to a strength out of all proportion to our own. I was carried wounded on board the *Ramillies*.

Here begins an episode in my life, a torture which lasted for nearly nine years—my imprisonment on board the English hulks. I thought I was dead to the past, but my blood boils with indignation when I recall the unheard-of sufferings that I endured in those tombs of the living! The lot of a solitary prisoner awakens compassion, but how far preferable is it to that which was mine. At least he is not tortured by witnessing the sufferings of a herd of poor wretches, brutalised and exasperated by privations and misery. Far from exaggerating, I would even wish to abate something of the truth in my account of the terrible mysteries of the English hulks.

It took us six weeks to get to Portsmouth Roads, and on the morning after our arrival, I was transferred, with some others, to the hulk *Proteus*. For the benefit of those who don't know what a hulk is, I may explain that it is an old dismantled vessel, a two or three decker, which is moored fast, so as to be almost as immovable as a stone building. I feel still the shudder I had at first sight of the *Proteus*, anchored in a line with eight other floating prisons, its black shapeless mass bringing to one's mind the form of an immense sarcophagus. Despair was in my heart while, as the Transport Office was carrying us on board, I gazed on this gloomy tomb, in which, buried alive, my youth was to be passed; my imagination,

piercing the thick wooden walls, shewed me the withered, woesome faces of the poor wretches inside; but a few minutes later, and I learned how far below the terrible reality was my imagination. I passed between rows of soldiers on to the deck, and was brutally thrust into the midst of the wretched, hideous mortals that peopled the hulk. No pen, how powerful soever, could bring before the reader the sight on which my eyes fell. Imagine a crowd of corpses leaving their graves for a moment—hollow eyes, wan, cadaverous complexions, bent backs, beards neglected, emaciated bodies, scarcely covered with yellow rags, almost in shreds, and you will then have some notion, very weak, it is true, and far from complete, of the scene that I saw.

Scarcely had I set foot on deck, when the warders laid hold of me, tore off my clothes with violence, forced me into an icy-cold bath, and then dressed me in a shirt, a pair of trousers, and waistcoat of an orange yellow. No stuff had been wasted in making these garments; the trousers came to an end half-way down my legs, and the waistcoat obstinately refused to button. These two garments bore an enormous T and O stamped on them in black; those letters stood for Transport Office. When dressed, I and my companions had our names entered, and then each of us had a post assigned to him.

The fore-castle and the space between it and the quarter-deck were the only parts where the prisoners were allowed to take air and exercise, and not always even there. This space was about forty-four feet long by thirty-eight wide. Gaiety never deserts a Frenchman; under misfortunes, it may be tinged with irony; this narrow space was called by the prisoners 'the Park.' Fore and aft were the English; at one end, the lieutenant in command, the officers, their servants, and a few soldiers; troops at the other. The part allotted to the prisoners was strongly boarded off, and the boards were thickly studded with broad-headed nails, making them almost as impenetrable as a wall of iron; and at intervals were loopholes, which, in case of an outbreak, would enable the English to fire on us without exposing themselves. The prisoners' berths were on the lower gun-deck and the orlop-deck, each of which was about one hundred and thirty feet long by forty wide. In this space were lodged nearly seven hundred men. The little light which could have reached us through the port-holes was obscured by gratings two inches thick, which were inspected daily by our jailers. All round the vessel, ran a gallery with open flooring, so that, had any one attempted to hide underneath, he would have been immediately seen by the sentinels, who were always on duty in this gallery. Our guard consisted of about forty or fifty soldiers; there were on board besides about twenty sailors and a few boys. Sentinels were placed all over the vessel, and on the quarter-deck were always eight or ten men ready to take arms at the least noise. At night, we heard, every quarter of an hour, the monotonous cry of the sentinels—'All's well.'

At six o'clock in the evening during summer, and at two in winter, the English went round striking the sides of the hulk and the gratings over the port-holes, to see that all was right; an hour later, soldiers armed with loaded and bayoneted muskets came into our part of the hulk, and made us go on

deck, that we might be counted. After this, the hatches and port-holes were closed, in winter at least, for in summer the port-holes were left open, or we should have been all dead in the morning. As it was, the air was so poisoned by the close shutting up together of so many persons, that the English, after opening the hatches in the morning, rushed away from them immediately. The furniture of the hulk was very simple; it consisted of a long bench placed against the walls, and four others in the middle. Each prisoner received on coming on board a hammock, a thin blanket, and a flock-mattress, weighing two or three pounds at the outside. I have said before that there were about seven hundred of us to be stowed away in two rooms, each one hundred and thirty feet long by forty wide; their height was at most six feet, and the hammocks were arranged in two rows, one above the other. There was no distinction of rank among us, but those of the prisoners who could afford it, had made a sort of frame, which they themselves fitted with mattresses; they were thus a little more comfortable; but poisonous air and vermin were the lot of all alike.

It was, however, in our provisions that the hatred of the English shewed itself most clearly. Each prisoner's ration consisted of a pound and a quarter of brown bread, and of seven ounces of cow-beef; for soup at noon, we were allowed three ounces of barley and an ounce of onion for every four men. One day in the week, instead of meat and soup, we had a pound of red herring and a pound of potatoes; and on another, a pound of dried cod, with the same quantity of potatoes. These quantities would have been sufficient, but the contractors always cheated; there were also deductions made from a prisoner's allowance for an attempted escape, and for other matters, and we had made a rule that each should contribute his share towards these diminutions. There were also other reductions made voluntarily by ourselves to pay for a newspaper, clandestinely introduced, and to supply money to those who escaped. The provisions were cooked by some of our own number; we breakfasted on dry bread; at noon we had our soup with bread in it, and the meat was reserved for supper. The herrings were so detestable that we generally sold them back again to the contractors at a low price; they came round again to us the next week; and in this way some of them did duty faithfully for more than ten years! With the money realised by their sale, we bought a little butter or cheese. The dried cod was bad, but we could manage to swallow it. The bread was often heavy as lead, but heavy as it was, the weight given to us was frequently so insufficient that we were compelled to make complaints, and in that case had to wait fasting till the evening, before the proper authority could find time to give his decision. Water was brought to us by little boats, from which we ourselves had to raise it; those who were too weak, too old, or too dignified to share in this task, paid a half-penny to their substitutes. We had also to take each his part in cleaning our decks and the Park. Crimes and disorders, the reader may suppose, would be frequent enough in such an assembly of men, exasperated by suffering and misfortune: in the *Proteus*, order was preserved as far as possible by a committee of eight members, chosen by the majority, and their task was to issue orders relating either to our general life or to

particular cases, and also to give decisions without appeal in all differences that arose. In the event of a crime, however, the committee had only the power to summon all the prisoners, who in grave cases were the judges. The right of pardon did not exist in our community—all sentences were rigorously carried out. To these means of keeping order must be added the moral influence of the officers on board, for although there was no distinction of ranks, they were generally esteemed, and could mostly get a hearing from the crowd.

This was the community into which I was now introduced. When I went to take the post assigned to me, there seemed to me to hang about the long chamber a thick cloud, bearing in it the germ of epidemics. I had been in my life in a slaver with two hundred and fifty slaves packed in the hold, I knew how foul and poisonous was the atmosphere there, and thought that nothing could be worse—I now learned my mistake. The horrible den in which I found myself was dimly lighted by the port-holes covered with gratings; as my eyes became accustomed to the dim light, I saw around the pale corpse-like ragged wretches I have described. Except a few who, stretched on the boards at full length, wan and dull-eyed, seemed at the point of death, all in this hideous den were busily engaged. Some, armed with planes, were carpentering; others were at work in bone, making ornaments and chessmen; others were making really beautiful models of ships; some were making straw-hats, and others knitted night-caps; there were also among them tailors, shoemakers, and one man who manufactured, Heaven knows from what, *tobacco*; nor, as a fact characteristic of our nation, must I omit the professors of fencing, the *bdton*, and, above all, dancing-masters, whose lessons were charged at the rate of a half-penny for an hour's instruction. Seated near the port-holes were some officers, who, by way of killing the time and earning a few pence, gave lessons in algebra or geometry, at a price not above that which the dancing-master received. Through this crowd moved dealers with their cries of 'Who's got anything to sell? Who buys?' Every now and then, some poor wretch, with hunger in his looks, would stop one of them, and sell the miserable rags from his back, and then, turning to another dealer, lay out the produce in wretched food. Some of the occupations of which I have spoken—such as, for example, straw-plaiting—were forbidden by the English, as coming into competition with their own manufactures; with slight interruptions, however, the prisoners worked continuously through the whole day.

Did a soldier, sentinel or not, set foot on the gangway leading to our part of the hulk, the first prisoner who observed him raised the signal agreed on by us; and at the cry of 'Ship!' repeated from one end to the other, everything forbidden was stowed away, and those who might happen to be piercing the walls of the hulk in order to make their escape gave over for a while.

My adventurous life had brought me into contact with many hardships, but when I was shewn the place assigned to me my heart sank. I had, however, a little money; and for three out of my five louis, I purchased from a soldier, who had succeeded to it within a fortnight, the right to the best place in the hulk. Into the bargain, I got a table and bench, and thus I was installed.

I had not been long on board before I found

that there was a particular class excelling the generality in utter misery; they were called the *rafalés*, and lived penned up by themselves in seclusion from the rest. Incurable gamblers, these wretches had long since parted with their hammocks and blankets; at night they would lie for the sake of warmth in a row on the bare boards, all on the same side; and when the one at the head of a row got tired of the position, he would just cry out 'Tack!' and the whole line would immediately change sides. The strange misery of this existence seemed, nevertheless, to have charms, for outsiders would occasionally wish to enter this fellowship, but to do this, certain rules had to be complied with. The aspirant had to sell all he possessed, and to give a treat of beer and bread, after which a stone would be given to him as a pillow, and he was then received as a member. The experiment was tried of giving these men fresh hammocks, but they found their softness insupportable, and sold them. Many of these wretches were all but naked; and when the roll was called, two or three in this condition would hire between them an old blanket, under cover of which they would go on deck; for this accommodation, the value of a half-penny (for money was a thing unknown to them) was deducted from their next day's rations. The rations of these men would be pledged for sometimes five or six days in advance, and then they would wander about looking with hungry eyes for potato-peelings or onion-skins; a herring-head or cabbage-stump would be a magnificent discovery; not seldom, however, two *rafalés* in the last extreme of hunger would even gamble for the prizes thus obtained. Most of them, of course, soon died, but others, when at the point of death, would be recovered by a course of treatment in the hospital.

By way of passing the time, and in order that when my liberation came I might be able to pass my examination, I determined to join those who were studying mathematics. The difficulties in our way were not slight; yet so earnestly did we study on board the hulks, that I have known rude ignorant sailors, who at setting out could not form a single letter of the alphabet, become possessed in a few years, not only of the power to write fluently, but also of a competent knowledge of geography and mathematics. Our first difficulty was to get books and instruments, and when this was overcome, we had still got an immense deal to do. The noise on deck by day rendered hopeless all attempt at study, and lights were forbidden at night; at night, however, we determined to work. The students were the poorest body on board, with the exception always of our friends the *rafalés*; we had no money, but to work at night we must have a lamp or candle. At dinner, therefore, every student was bound to set apart carefully every morsel of fat from his meat; this fat was collected in a large shell, and with the addition of a wick, we had our lamp. When night came, we drew our benches up to the table under our lamp, and then surrounded the whole with a sort of hat, built up of mattresses, hammocks, and blankets. Every chink had to be stopped up to hide the light from the English, who were constantly on the watch through the loopholes. So close became sometimes the air in this sanctuary, that I have frequently seen men by no means weak or delicate fall senseless. These precautions were necessary, as, had we been dis-

covered, not only should we have had three days in the black-hole (an awful den), on two-thirds of the allowance, but the English, by a refinement of cruelty which I have always been at a loss to understand, were wont to destroy in the presence of prisoners thus breaking the rules, books, papers, slates, and other things.

It may be supposed that there was no lack of attempts to escape from this life, which, in one of the three different hulks on board of which I was during my imprisonment, was rendered still more miserable by the choleric and vindictive character of the lieutenant in command. The first of these attempts after my arrival was made in the following manner. I have stated that water was brought over to us by little boats; these boats carried back empty the barrels they had previously left. Accordingly, the night before the arrival of the water-boat, one of our number hid himself in an empty barrel. I and another were in the secret, and it happened to be our turn to assist in raising and lowering the casks. We had raised all the full barrels, and the order was given to lower the empty ones. I could hear my heart beat, when, after having lowered all but the row which would remain at the top, my companion and I moved towards a barrel marked with a notch, to shew us that it was there our friend lay hidden. It descended safely, and the boat after a while pushed off. The man who had invented this desperate means of escape intended to remain till the following night in his barrel, and then, when all was quiet, to get somehow to shore. Wild as the undertaking seemed, it succeeded nevertheless; but some time afterwards, when, from not hearing of his capture, we concluded that he had made good his escape, and were about to repeat the attempt, we observed, to our bitter disappointment, that the English carefully inspected the barrels before lowering them.

Various other methods were put in practice; and it was not seldom that, in the dead of night, we were awakened by the firing of a musket, followed perhaps by a cry, whereby we learned that some attempt had been discovered. The water would be immediately illuminated, and boats would put off from the other hulks to aid in chase if necessary, and presently soldiers would invade our den, and wake up those who still slept with blows of the fist or the butt-end of their muskets. Then, for two hours, perhaps, we should have to turn out on deck, while we were counted several times over; and when we at last regained our hammocks, the rest of the night would pass in questions and suppositions as to who had escaped, and whether he had got safely off, for an intended attempt was made known to those only who were to share in it, and a few friends who could be relied on. Men made desperate by hunger would, for the sake of a little relief, turn traitors, and inform against their companions in wretchedness. So many escapes were effected, that at last, in order to reduce their number, the English government decreed that the flight of a prisoner should be punished by the death of two others, who were to be hanged in his place, in case he should not be retaken. I leave the reader to judge of the indignation caused on board the hulks by the promulgation of this order. Our officers met together and drew up a letter, addressed to the Privy Council; and from it, in support of what I have stated, and which else

might appear my own invention, I cite the following passages: 'We are unable adequately to express our astonishment at the order which you have addressed to us; we have had to read it over and over again before we could persuade ourselves that it was possible for persons belonging to a nation calling itself civilised, to put forward such barbarous threats as those contained in the order. You throw on us the responsibility of holding in safe custody our comrades, removing it from those to whom is confided their safe-keeping. Prisoners are themselves to answer for prisoners, and at the hazard of their lives.' And again: 'We cannot doubt that it is your wish to reduce us to despair; but we swear all, that whatever you may have in store for us, we will meet it with a firmness which will not disgrace the great nation to which we have the honour to belong. We choose death rather than ignominy; and death we will face when called on in such a way as to leave behind us an example of courage and firmness as striking as that you afford of injustice and cruelty.' This letter was followed by petitions from all the hulks, and the atrocious measure was never put in force.

Three attempts at escape which I myself had made had turned out unsuccessfully: in the first, my companion, who was the first to venture from a hole we had cut in the sides of the hulk, was shot at and cut down by the sentinels; in the second, I was nearly drowned, and was taken back alone to the hulk, my former companion, who accompanied me this time, also succumbing to the fate which I barely escaped; and in the third, I and two others had actually got in a boat within sight of France, when we were re-captured by an English corvette we fell in with. I was utterly broken down. The ill-treatment we had so long suffered grew worse; news reached us of the disasters of the French armies, and every moment we had to listen to the grossest abuse of our emperor and our country: we, the French, were a set of cowards, who turned round and fled if we were looked at in the face; we were only fit to massacre children and outrage women; it was waste to use powder and shot against us—sticks were quite enough. These were the insults incessantly levelled at us by our jailers. One day my patience was exhausted, and I knocked down a sailor who had grossly insulted me; others rushed up, and a fight ensued; the captain came up; and bruised and bleeding, I was thrust into the black-hole. Five days had I been here, when earlier in the morning than usual came the man who generally brought me the morsel of horrible bread which was to last till the next day: 'You can come out,' he said kindly; 'you are free.' I rushed on deck to get fresh air, where, to my surprise, I found my comrades crying, laughing, dancing, shouting. What did it mean? The peace had been signed, and we were free!

Here ends the narration of M. Garneray; but for the satisfaction of the reader, we will ourselves add a few particulars of his subsequent career.

On his return to France, M. Garneray prepared to carry out the intention of submitting himself to an examination in navigation, formed on board the hulks; but from this course, he was dissuaded by his friends. To beguile his captivity, he had resumed the studies begun under his father, and abandoned while he was still almost a child. His first attempts with crayon were not altogether

successful; but having, by great privations, saved the means of procuring colours and brushes, he gave evidence of a talent hitherto unsuspected even by himself. It became known that on board the hulks was a prisoner who painted sea-pieces; these were bought up as fast as he could produce them, and examples of his work may yet be found, we believe, in Portsmouth. Having regained his liberty, he was urged to pursue a career so successfully begun; he yielded, and in 1816, exhibited a view of the Port of London. For forty years, he exhibited regularly one or more works, and many of these he himself afterwards engraved; the originals are now distributed among the principal museums of France. He was made Chevalier of the Legion of Honour in 1852; and in the Universal Exhibition of 1855, gained a silver medal and government approbation for a new kind of canvas (for pictures, not for ships) which he had invented. Not content with these varied exploits, M. Garneray turned author, and published, in the columns of the *Patrie*, an account of his life and adventures, which has lately been republished with illustrations by the author.

THE METROPOLITAN POLICE, AND WHAT IS PAID FOR THEM.

A CERTAIN celebrated stranger who lately received much honour amongst us, took occasion to pay homage to the London police, and—through them—to their brethren in blue throughout the country. He said: 'When I speak of the English police, I take off my hat;' and the reports add, that the great man 'suited the action to the word.' It is not often these useful men receive such public and comprehensive praise, so let them lay it to heart. More frequently, the members of the force are regarded as the fittest subjects for a joke; and from *Punch* down to the street Arab, anybody's pleasantry at the expense of a policeman is considered to be particularly justifiable. No one with a grain of sense would expect policemen to be ubiquitous, yet it is always considered witty to remark on their arrival at the close of a fray. Perhaps the equanimity with which these 'belted knights' accept 'the chaff' with which they are often greeted, has a tendency to pique the satirical faculties of observers. Somehow, the policeman learns to affect, or really acquires a preternatural gravity of demeanour worthy of a philosopher. He can also readily assume the smile sardonic over cases of simulated distress, or when his experienced eye detects the result of strong potations in some poor wretch, whom the credulous bystander regards as suffering from mortal illness.

The task which is daily imposed on the ordinary police constable is not an easy one. In our crowded streets, he has to preserve the greatest degree of order that is compatible with the smallest amount of interference on his part. To do this requires the constant exercise of common sense, and, not seldom, a good deal of tact. No set regulations, however skillfully devised in Scotland Yard, can supersede the necessity for that prompt judgment which the policeman must use in the streets of London. No doubt, he errs sometimes, for even a policeman cannot always keep his temper, or act with the dignity of a judge. He has often to decide between conflicting asseverations of the most positive kind, and to discriminate between

fraud and misfortune; his deliberations having generally to be conducted amidst a crowd of differing counsellors.

The ordinary police constable is taken from those who are roughly spoken of as 'the masses' of our population. His rate of remuneration, though somewhat above that of a town labourer, is less than that of most artisans. It is needful that he should have had some elementary education, but that is now generally possessed by the class from which he is taken; so that the habitual discretion and moderation of conduct displayed by the policeman, may be considered to represent the average of those qualities as possessed by the ordinary working-man in England.

So valuable an organisation as the police force, so essential to the social order of this great metropolis and the comfort of its denizens, cannot be maintained without considerable aggregate cost. Few, however, who fairly examine the various items of expenditure for the metropolitan police, will find much to criticise. Every ratepayer can easily satisfy himself as to how the money is spent, as a complete return of payments and receipts is annually prepared by Sir Richard Mayne, and presented to parliament. The annual return was printed a few weeks ago, and contains a full account of all payments made, up to December 31, 1863, for the following purposes: 'The Metropolitan Police; the Police Superannuation Fund; Public Carriages; and Police Courts.' There are also two appendices, one of them consisting of a detailed statement of the gross rentals on which the rate is charged, and the net amounts levied, for police purposes, in every 'parish, township, precinct, and place' of the metropolitan district. The district not only comprises—always excepting the territory of the Lord Mayor—the whole of Middlesex and the shipping on the river, but it also extends into the four counties of Kent, Surrey, Essex, and Herts, in all of which Sir R. Mayne possesses magisterial jurisdiction, as he does also, we believe, in two other counties besides.

Appendix 'A' in the return recites the respective numbers in each of the four classes of police-officers, with the salaries and allowances enjoyed in each division. The total number of men in the force is 7327. Of these there are in the first rank—that of superintendents—23, of whom 17 each receive £250 per annum, 5 have smaller sums, and only one has a larger salary. There are 200 inspectors, 159 having annual salaries of £118, 6s. Of sergeants, there are 768, of whom 731 are paid £1, 4s. 6d. per week. The constables—the rank and file of the force—number 6336. Upwards of 4000 receive 19s., and 1847 have £1, 1s. per week; a very few receive £1, 8s.; and, besides their clothing, all the constables have an allowance of house-coal. Not only have all the policemen fire-sides of their own, but several of them are so fortunate as to have a wife at home; this, indeed, is only a natural result of the opportunities which the force enjoy in their daily inspection of the 'area-belles' throughout this great city. It appears that the authorities approve of matrimony in the case of these guardians of our homes, for the wedded constable receives forty pounds of coal weekly all the year round, whilst his bachelor comrade has the allowance reduced to half during the four summer months.

Whilst Mr Gladstone seeks only to entice the

working-classes into habits of forethought, the police are made provident by rule; for the same system that compels them to wear a blue coat also obliges them to lay up a store for old age. From the salaries of, we believe, all the four ranks of the police force there are deducted certain definite sums, that go to form a superannuation allowance. The different rates of these deductions are not stated; but the total sum subtracted from the wages of the force during last year was £7562; nearly half as much more was taken for 'stoppages during sickness,' and £300 as fines for misconduct, making an aggregate of £11,204 contributed by the police towards their own future comforts, out of the rates of salary enumerated above. Yet the force as a whole is generously dealt with, for the superannuitants—1630 in last year—received £55,287; that is, nearly five times the amount contributed by the force: and we observe in another part of these returns an item of £114, which also was paid in pensions and allowances to widows and children of policemen who had died from injuries received in the execution of their duty. Nearly £3000 is also obtained towards this fund from the fines imposed by the magistrates on drunk and disorderly persons, and for assaults on the police; and the sale of policemen's 'old clo'' produced £1316 in aid of the same purpose. But the larger part of the superannuation fund—£38,256—is supplied from the general fund of the metropolitan police, which is itself provided from national sources by a parliamentary vote.

There are ratepayers who are apt to 'consider too curiously' as to parochial expenditure, and in so doing give themselves needless anxiety. Some of these may query to themselves, 'whose money is it that pays the policemen who are always to be seen at the Houses of Parliament and other public buildings, as well as in theatres and many private establishments?' Such economists may rest assured that those special services of the police are all charged to the institutions that receive them, the respective payments being placed to the debit of the metropolitan police fund. The Admiralty is the largest customer for police supervision: that department paid £33,015 for such service, and the War-office—for policemen at Aldershot and other stations—paid £10,000. For their attendance at the Treasury Offices and Houses of Parliament, £857 was paid; at the Royal Mint, £460; and at the Record Office, £419. The Geological, Science and Art Museums of the Board of Trade cost for police guardianship, £2546; the British Museum, £730; and the two National Galleries—at Trafalgar Square and South Kensington—cost £1005 for the protection of their priceless treasures. The Inland Revenue Office paid £1283, mainly for the services of the police at Somerset House; and a similar sum was paid by the trustees of Greenwich Hospital. Public companies, including such as the Crystal Palace and Railway Companies, together with private individuals, contribute an aggregate of £5514 towards the expense of the police; and the Theatres paid £503.

Besides those sums directly contributed in return for police services received, the nation takes its part, to some extent,* along with the metropolitan

* 'To some extent.' The whole question of the propriety of government being fully rated for local taxation, has lately been discussed in the House, and may be

ratepayers, in paying its quota of police-rates on account of the large portions of land in the city of Westminster that are occupied by public buildings. The total amount levied by rate-warrants for the purposes of the metropolitan police is L.461,503, of which sum L.115,375 is paid by government as national ratepayer. Of the remainder of the total cost of the police in 1863—which was L.554,240—L.27,753 was defrayed by parliamentary votes, and the residue by the payments for special services, from which we have, above, selected a few of the principal items.

Appendix 'A' in the return consists of a list of over two hundred lines, enumerating every 'parish, township, precinct, and place' in the district, together with a specification of the rental in each, and the sum charged upon and received for the purposes of the metropolitan police. The medieval designations of many 'hamlets' and 'liberties' illustrate that regard for ancient usage which is such a national characteristic; and the immense disparity in the various amounts shews a truly British disregard for regularity. In these respects, the return exhibits a striking contrast to the rectangles and parallelograms which are so precious in the eyes of French and American administrators. This table is very suggestive of rapid change, when compared with the distribution of London population thirty years ago, and the growth of metropolitan house-property within that period. Still more striking is it when compared with the statistics in the early part of last century; then, Marylebone was a small village distant nearly a mile from any part of London, and St Pancras was 'a hamlet two miles to the north of the city.' In the return before us, the rental of the parish of Marylebone is entered at L.983,583, and its net contribution for the purposes of the police in 1863 is L.24,589: these are the largest sums in the list. St George's, Hanover Square, is nearly as rich a parish; and then St Pancras comes next, with a rental of L.856,418, and a police-rate of L.28,547. St Mary's, Islington, comprises property of L.690,359 in annual value, contributing L.17,258 for police purposes; and St Mary's, Lambeth, pays about L.1000 a year less. The parish of Paddington is nearly as large, and contributes almost L.15,000 to the rate. The parishes just enumerated much exceed any other in extent and value of property. St James's, Westminster, may take precedence in the second class, having a rental of L.431,502; and Kensington has L.408,906. Some of the new suburban districts of the metropolis are probably as much indebted to the services of the police as any, and the rapid increase of expensive house-property brings them in as good contributors to the fund. Thus, 'the precinct of Norwood' now contains property of the annual value of L.15,105; and the 'hamlet of Penge,' which probably includes the whole of Sydenham, is worth an annual rental of L.52,480. Croydon, one of the most rapidly-extended outposts of

London, has now a rental of L.153,150, paying L.3828 for protection by the police. The parish of Streatham contains property rented at nearly L.60,000 per annum; Tottenham, having a rental of L.57,457, pays L.1436 for the police, and Edmonton about L.300 a year less. Epsom is one of the most distant parishes in the district, and perhaps for that reason its denizens are backward in paying their quota towards the support of Sir R. Mayne's army. Of the very few instances of arrears recorded in this return, Epsom is one, having a balance against it, on December 31st, larger than its whole yearly contribution, which is L.286. One of the smallest levies in the list is that from 'the Close of the Collegiate Church, St Peter's, Westminster,' amounting to L.35, 11s.

Under the head of receipt and expenditure for 'the Service of the Police Courts,' we observe that the fines, penalties, and forfeitures levied during last year in the thirteen metropolitan courts, together with small sums from the suburban districts, amount to L.12,325. The Thames Court received the largest share of these the spoils of evil-doers—namely, L.1400; and Westminster Court the least within metropolitan bounds, being only L.581. Of the eighteen suburban districts, Beacontree appears to be the most important, as it contributes nearly L.300, by far the largest share under this head; and Chipping-Barnet sends the smallest amount of rascals' pence—namely, L.8, 5s. The names of those villages, together with Epsom as the most southern, and Waltham Abbey as the most northern point of the district, will afford a familiar idea of the extent of territory over which Sir R. Mayne sways the truncheon. By far the largest part of the legal expenses of the police courts—L.57,330—is provided by parliamentary vote, about a half of it from the Consolidated Fund. The amount of salaries paid is L.39,826; of that sum, L.26,306 is paid to twenty-two stipendiary magistrates, at L.1200 each, and one chief-magistrate at L.1500. On the pension-list of the police courts, there were, on the last day of 1863, twenty magistrates and clerks, receiving an aggregate amount of L.5267.

The attendance on and inspection of public carriages is managed by a distinct portion of the police force, for which a separate set of accounts is kept. The net expense of this department for last year was L.11,462; but this is paid by the Inland Revenue Office, for without the co-operation of the police, the duties on public conveyances could not be collected.

The clothing of the police of all kinds cost last year L.32,834, being an average of rather less than L.4, 10s. for each man. A comparison of the amount paid for clothing, with the cost of the policemen's armoury, exhibits the essentially civilian character of the force, the total charge for 'truncheons, rattles, swords, and belts' being L.360. Sometimes policemen act as good Samaritans: we find an item of L.1017 paid for attendance and medicine for destitute prisoners and poor persons who had met with accidents in the public thoroughfares. Medical attendance on the police themselves, and the funeral expenses of forty-eight dying last year, amounted to L.2652.

In thus glancing over the expenditure, and indicating the scope of the duties undertaken by the metropolitan police, it is not within our province to pass any opinion as to the principles on which

regarded as settled for some years to come. Although cases of some hardship were made out in behalf of dock-yard and barrack parishes, Mr F. Peel repudiated, on behalf of government, any liability for local taxation; Mr Gladstone also contended, that if full rates were paid in public establishments, that it would be a gratuitous premium to local ratepayers at the expense of the nation. In practice, however, some portion of the rates has been paid, as in the instance above.

this great civilian force should be administered. Besides its great purpose of the repression of crime, its service in lessening the amount of friction amidst the bustle of London life is scarcely of less importance. Doubtless, there are cases of exception to the ordinary discretion and moderation with which the police do their duty. Though well-dressed people always meet with civility from 'A' to 'Z,' it is possible that the ragged and the outcast may occasionally meet with the hasty word or unnecessary force from the constable, who is for them the despot of the streets. One great merit in the police is, however, that they know nothing of politics; the man in blue always preserves his neutral tint. Ministries may rise and fall, but the policeman in the lobby of St Stephen's is unmoved by changes that agitate lordly breasts; and amidst the excitement of electioneering contests, the good old cause of order is the only side that the policeman supports.

LORD LYNN'S WIFE.

CHAPTER XVIII.—THE FEVER AT PATCHAM.

MR MAINWARING'S report of the condition of Patcham Cross Roads was not in the least exaggerated. The long straggling village was at no time in a state that would have won the approbation of the Board of Health; but in ordinary years it got on with only a percentage of ague over and above that which the adjacent hamlets could reckon. The village was a neglected one, and the people poor. There had been Works there once, but nothing remained of them but a tall brick chimney, some sheds, and a quantity of slag and scoriae—nothing but these, and such a portion of the floating population as had proved too lazy, too hopeless, or to improvident to follow the receding genius of manufacture to more northern regions. For one or other of these reasons, a number of ragged families, chiefly Irish, remained behind, leading a precarious life, and eking out the scanty wages they picked up in farm-work by as free resort to the rates as the guardians would permit.

Mr Killick had often groaned over the state of the place, but his influence was smaller than it ought to have been. Neither the villagers nor Mr West, the nominal squire, would listen to the doctor. Indeed, Mr West was an embarrassed man, seldom able to spare more than a few pounds to blanket-funds and clothing-clubs, and groaning piteously over even these quasi-compulsory disbursements. It was labour lost to ask such a landowner as this, most of whose rents were received by a sharp, money-lending firm at Thavies' Inn, for the benefit of mortgagees, real or imaginary, to repair houses and set drains to rights. Nor were the cottagers able or willing to execute such improvements at their own charge. They said, as their landlord said, that Mr Killick was doubtless very right, but that it could not be helped. Then the crash came. Five cases of fever were reported, then seven, and in a few days there were from thirty to forty sufferers under the fang of typhus.

What Mr Killick had expected, came to pass. The Wests went off, fairly frightened, to the seaside, at the first outbreak of the pest. Mrs West, to be sure, left the doctor five pounds towards buying delicacies for the sick, and the squire gave as much for medicines for his poorer tenants; but

that was all: they could not stay; and away they went, leaving the surgeon and the vicar, with their hard-working wives, to cheer the panic-stricken, tend the dying, and do what they could for those whose affliction was almost more than they could bear.

In this emergency, Mr Killick found a very useful auxiliary in his niece, Lydia Crawse. That young lady had for a long while been in a very snappish and irritable frame of mind, on account of the non-performance of Miss Darcy's promises. She had received two letters from the future peeress—soothing, well-worded letters, but still mere words written with ink on paper, not facts. The sixty pounds that Miss Crawse had wrung from Aurelia, and every penny of which had been faithfully transmitted to her mother, now burdened with the maintenance of her two great hungry sons, and clamorous for help, were facts, something hard and tangible. But Miss Crawse was by no means equally sure that Aurelia's smiling assurance, given when the surgeon's niece had paid a second visit to Beechborough Hall, that her brother Tom's case had been pressed on the notice of the Admiralty, and that Lord Lynn had every hope of procuring his speedy nomination to the rank of assistant-paymaster in some ship actually in commission, was also fact. Rear-admiral Wyvil was, as Miss Crawse was aware, high in official position, and could probably secure Thomas Crawse the desired post, and even that speedy promotion at which Miss Darcy hinted. But Miss Crawse grew more and more testy and incredulous as time went on, and Tom and Willie remained in Bail Street to share the widow's crust, and could find nothing else to do but to saunter about the docks with their strong red-knuckled hands idly thrust into the pockets of their shabby shooting-coats, yawning over the dreary discussion of their prospects, and in much danger of getting into evil habits and bad company from sheer lack of better things.

Another cause for the impatience with which dark Lydia waited for the price of her secrecy was the fear that the wand wherewith she had hitherto maintained her influence over Aurelia was gradually slipping from her grasp. She had a vague suspicion that her former friend was escaping from the ties, such as they were, that bound her to her *confidante* of other days, and might soon be beyond her reach. Should this brilliant marriage take place before Miss Crawse had received what she deemed her due, who knew whether the debtor might not be borne aloft in the charmed chariot of prosperity, far beyond the power of the baffled creditor! The contest, if such there were, between a peeress of England, rich, honoured, strong in her rights and in the world's friendship, and as well able as any living woman to use every one of her advantages without mercy or scruple against her lowly antagonist—the contest between Lady Lynn and Miss Crawse would be a very unequal one. It is true that the ex-companion possessed a weapon, held in reserve as yet, by the aid of which she had been used to believe that she could lay her opponent in the dust as surely as the smooth stone from David's sling brought down the might of Goliath. But to employ this means of victory was to lose its fruits, all save revenge; and revenge, even if Miss Crawse had been much more vindictive than, to do her justice, she was, would be a costly luxury. In

ruining her enemy, she ran the risk of being herself crushed. Her hopes of profiting by what she knew, must depend on Aurelia's prudence, not on Aurelia's downfall or disgrace; and a scandal could not benefit Miss Crawse, who had not only her own bread to earn, but the weal of her whole family to strive for.

In fact, Miss Crawse was in the difficulty in which thousands before her have found themselves, anxious to squeeze the sponge, but fearing to drain it dry by hasty handling—eager to secure the golden eggs, but afraid to spoil their harvest by killing the bird outright. She knew not whether it were best to be silent or troublesome, and hence she kept her own nerves perpetually on the stretch. Under these circumstances, the outbreak of the fever excited her rather than distressed her. She was a stout-hearted little creature, and loved bustle and turmoil as the war-horse loves the trumpet-sound; she was an indefatigable volunteer in nursing the sick, and trudged sturdily about the village, fetching and carrying physics, broth, jelly, arrowroot, wine, anything and everything, and finding time to read, exhort, comfort, or scold, as the exigencies of the case might require. She was very useful and active, and won praise from the vicar and his wife, as well as from her aunt and uncle, which last-named relative told her in so many words that she 'did more good than half his bark and gentian,' while he cautioned her not to knock herself up by overexertion; to which Miss Crawse made answer, that it was not natural to her to sit with her hands before her, and that she rather enjoyed the excitement of battling with the pest than otherwise.

The weather grew colder, and the fever slackened. There were a good many fresh mounds of withy-bound turf in the churchyard, to be sure, and not a few yellow, dim-eyed convalescents tottering feebly about, with the aid of sticks and friendly arms, and who wanted a great deal more port wine and calf's-foot jelly than Mr Killick could coax out of the authorities of the Union. The fever was conquered, and was fast being trodden out and extirpated; and the Wests, tired of their sea-side lodgings, had written to their housekeeper to announce their return, when a new case occurred. It occurred in this wise: Miss Crawse, who had worked very hard in the good cause, not from any exalted motives, and certainly not from any mean ones, but because the Killicks worked, and the vicar and Mrs Pearson worked, and it was her nature to work, began to feel, now the fight was over, how very tired she was. Hurried meals, foul air, deficient sleep, exposure to wet and cold, these are not calculated to strengthen and fortify the constitution, though they may often be faced with impunity, and often are faced, for the sake of the perishing. But Miss Crawse had an unquiet mind and a conscience that pricked her sometimes, and especially when she lay tossing and restless at night, and she was not so strong as she thought herself.

At any rate, coming back from the Byrnes' cottage, that of one of those Irish families that had fared the worst during the fever, and who had still two of the surviving children moaning under a sackcloth quilt, Miss Crawse felt ill—merely a dull weariness and lassitude, not to be wondered at, after all she had done, and a slight, a very slight headache. Miss Crawse dragged herself home,

walking in a slow, listless manner. She crawled rather than walked up the stairs, and dropped into the old-fashioned arm-chair, covered with gaudy, faded chintz, that stood beside her little white bed with its spotless curtains. She was glad to be there, and gave a sigh of relief. Then she untied her bonnet-strings, with fingers that were slow and awkward in doing their familiar office, and tossed her bonnet on the bed.

'Tiresome thing! it makes my head ache,' said Miss Crawse, passing her short fingers through her coal-black braids of hair, and dragging them back from her temples with the same peevish impatience as her former gesture had betrayed. She sat quite still for a few minutes with her eyes closed, but she was not asleep; her thoughts were busy. She was thinking of Aurelia, who was to be married very soon now; for Time, that never tires, had brought the wedding-day of Lord Lynn and Miss Darcy very near indeed; and no berth under government had yet been found for Tom or for Willie. Aurelia had sent more money and more fair words, but nothing else. And Miss Crawse, in guessing that her ungrateful patroness was reluctant really to urge the claims of the Brothers Crawse, or to shew any especial interest in her humble friend, had guessed very nearly the truth. Aurelia was unwilling to give cause to any one, and, above all, to her future husband, to imagine that Miss Crawse had any influence over her, or that her interest in that black-eyed damsel was other than casual and condescending. She preferred to keep her importunate petitioner ungratified until she should be firm in her new station; and then—why, then, if Lydia were still bent on her purpose, Aurelia knew very well that two words from a person as fashionable and sought after as she intended to be, would land two such very small aspirants as the Messieurs Crawse on the shelf of official clerkdom.

It is wonderful how often people would succeed better in this world if they were only a little less selfish. This was a case in point. Had Aurelia felt but a spark of honest affection for her old *confidante* of many a girlish fancy, had she honestly begged Lord Lynn to make it a point with Admiral Wyvil that the next vacancy should be filled by Thomas Crawse, and had she cast about among her friends for some one who could have lifted Willie to the modest eminence of a stool in the Inland Revenue Office, it might have been better for her. Had she even trusted the surgeon's niece on the subject of the recaptured prisoner, now in illegal durance at the hands of Nanny Brown and her ruffianly son, the sequel of her history might have been different. But she did none of these things. She went on boldly on her blind way like the doomed in the dread belief of the fatalist, and owned no guide but her own supposed interest.

It was in a great measure due to this conduct of Aurelia's that Lydia Crawse, sitting like one struck stupid in the great elbow-chair by the bed, pressed her hot hand to her hot brow, and said in sullen soliloquy: 'Knock, knock, knock, as if my temples were bursting! This is something new. I never have a headache. I hope I am not going to be ill. Ill!—pahaw! I am a goose. I am only a little tired, that is all.'

Only a little tired!—so tired that, after a weak attempt to dress for dinner after such easy fashion as the rule of Mr Killick's house dictated, she lay

down upon the bed, trembling, shuddering, with a heavy head, with pulses that beat fiercely, and a languor that was unsupportable. The maid, coming up to say that dinner waited, and getting no answer to her knock, entered the room, and ran down with a frightened face to report that the young lady did not seem to be well, and lay helpless without speaking. Then Mrs Killick went up, and came hurrying to fetch her husband, who looked very serious as he took Lydia's wrist between his sunburnt fingers, and noted how terribly accelerated was the pulse.

'She has got the fever, my dear. I thought as much. Get her to bed at once. There, there; don't cry; she'll pull through. Never knew a better constitution in my life,' said the doctor, and his sound practical judgment was correct as far as it went; but to minister to a mind diseased was beyond his skill, and he did not even know that his niece had anything on her mind. He was from home most part of the day, and when he came home was prone to rum and water, and such repose as he could snatch with a silk handkerchief over his face; and he thought Lydia a good plain sort of girl, with no nonsense in her disposition. She had got the fever now, sinking, as many amateur-nurses do, when the disease has been exercised out of the bodies of their patients. But Mr Killick had little fear. The girl would have care and kind treatment, and her constitution was tough, and her courage approved. He knew nothing of her inner life, nothing of her claim upon Aurelia Darcy.

So Miss Crawse lay fever-stricken, but likely to get well. Her aunt was a good nurse, her uncle a shrewd surgeon, and she wanted for nothing. When Mr Killick, some four-and-twenty hours after Lydia's falling ill, was called away to a distance to attend one of his most valuable patients, old Mrs Bligh of Boxted House, who had had a second stroke of paralysis, he confided the sufferer in his own dwelling cheerfully to his wife's care.

'It's all plain sailing,' he said: 'give her the medicine regularly, as it's labelled; keep the room cool, and don't let her drink anything but the toast and water or the linseed tea. If she has a fancy for anything not bad for her—a book or the *Illustrated London News*—don't thwart her. I shall not be back till lunch to-morrow, perhaps not then.'

Misled by her husband's words, misled by his tone of easy confidence, and, above all, misled by her niece's quiet, sensible demeanour, Mrs Killick indulged Miss Crawse by bringing her an unlimited supply of stationery.

'Please, give me pen and ink, and plenty of paper, for I should like so to write. It is so stupid, lying idle, and counting the threads in the bed-curtains. I should like to write a good long letter; I'm sure I should be the better for it.'

So said Miss Crawse; and unsuspecting Mrs Killick brought her what she demanded, only stipulating that she should wrap herself up, and avoid catching cold; and then Mrs Killick went to look after her children, and to see into various matters of domestic economy. Miss Crawse seized the pen, wolfishly, when her aunt's back was turned. She counted out the sheets of paper as a miser counts his gold. She exulted in the doctor's absence, and her own freedom from supervision. Her body was weak, and her hand unsteady, but

her mind was clear. All her faculties were concentrated into one absorbing purpose. She stretched out a shaking arm, and drew the table on which the lamp stood nearer to the bed; then she caught up the pen again, and her slobbering eyes glittered with a dangerous light.

'Let her thank herself for what happens. I owe her nothing, nothing,' said she; and she began to write. Her hand trembled, and the characters were ill-formed, but it was touching to see with what great pains and care she did her best to write legibly. She wrote, and wrote, and wrote, concealing the written sheets beneath the bolster of her bed. Then, when at last she heard her aunt's step on the stair, she pushed the writing materials from her, and feigned to be asleep. But when the house was hushed, at the dead of the night, Miss Crawse arose, lit a candle by the aid of the weak flickering lamp, and wrote on, stealthily and fast, while the hectic red gathered in her cheeks, and the damp gathered on her brow. 'By the help of this,' she panted out, with a terrible exultation, that contrasted fearfully with her ghastly face—'by the help of this, if I die, she will be forced yet to befriend the dear ones at home. If I die! But O that my brain may remain clear, that I may tell all!'

As she bent over her work, and as the paper crackled and rustled as she turned over page after page, it was strange to see how hard she fought against physical weakness and mental weariness. Her strong will, second in strength only to that of Aurelia, drove back the mists that began to cloud her fevered brain, it forced her hot hand to guide the pen, and fixed her bloodshot eyes upon the manuscript. Miss Crawse was not a pattern to her sex, but she was very true to the one all-engrossing sentiment that was the pole-star of her life. She, who had never known what love was, who had no philanthropy about her, had thrown the whole force of her narrow but fiery soul into the passionate attachment she bore to her own immediate kith and kin. We meet with such zealots now and then among women, people who would wrap a world in flames to provide for their own little Maries and Harries, for mother and sister, brother and uncle. Miss Crawse was one of these. She had resolved, at any peril to her own health, then hanging in the balance between death and life, to write a clear and intelligible narrative of those transactions in which she had been Aurelia's ally. Armed with this document, she felt assured that her relations, in the event of her dying on her present sick-bed, would be able to dictate such terms to the haughty Baroness Lynn as should enable them to rise for ever out of the slough of poverty. And she only hesitated, when the first few sheets were filled up, as to whether she should take time to write a letter of explanation to her mother, or one requesting her uncle, Mr Killick, carefully to seal up and deliver the papers, should she die without having leisure to forward the packet to Liverpool. But she decided against this precaution as a useless waste of precious time.

'Let me employ the precious hours well, while my memory holds good,' she said, resuming her labours. 'My mind is full of the past. To-morrow I will write the letter home, ay, and speak to my uncle Killick. To-morrow'—And she wrote on, painfully, anxiously, though her brain and her eyes reeled till she could hardly see the characters

traced by the unsteady hand that obeyed her tyrant will. At last she let the pen drop away from between her fingers, making great blots and smears across the page, and even on the counterpane, and fell back with swimming eyes upon the pillows, and there lay, while the candle burned down in its socket, and flickered and sputtered out the dregs of its life, in the gray winter-light of earliest dawn. When the servant-girl crept yawning into the chamber, just before the clock struck its eighth stroke, she almost screamed at finding Miss Crawse lying like a dead creature, livid and speechless, with her outspread hands buried in a heap of freshly-written manuscript. She ran to fetch her mistress, and Mrs Killick was as frightened as herself. When the surgeon came back, he found his patient in a high fever, delirious, restless, burning hot, and unable to recognise familiar faces or to speak coherently.

'Upon my word, my dear, you have looked after your niece to some purpose! If the girl dies, you'll know who deserves thanks for it, Mrs Killick,' said the doctor, with a roughness quite unusual to him when speaking to his wife. 'Where are those confounded papers she was writing, and what does it all mean?'

'I put them into the table-drawer,' sobbed Mrs Killick. 'Here's the key. If anything *should* happen'—

The surgeon took the key, and thrust it into his waistcoat pocket, and then went down stairs to compound medicaments. His face was very grave indeed.

CHAPTER XIX.—FOR LIBERTY.

At about the same hour at which the slipshod servant-maid, creeping reluctantly down from her warm bed in the attic, entered Miss Crawse's sick-chamber, to be scared by what she saw there, a prisoner lay watching greedily for the pale rays of the tardy dawn. The Queen's prisoners—felons and thieves—lie upon cocoa-nut mattresses, under warm blankets, in airy cells. They are well fed, not overworked, and properly cared for by surgeon and chaplain. Their warders stand in more awe of them than they of their warders, and handcuffs and leg-irons are only for the refractory and incorrigible. But this was a captive indeed. He lay upon straw and shavings, covered by a frowsy old rug, and the damp cold of the cellar where he was shut in pierced him to the bone. There were irons on his feet; they clanked as he stirred. It had been an ineffable gratification to Game Dick to fasten on those irons, made by a friendly blacksmith at a not too thriving forge miles away—a blacksmith who asked a fancy price, and no rude questions. The knave and jail-bird who riveted those fetters on the limbs of an honest man chuckled with dry humour as he played his new part. 'Turn and turn about,' he had said. 'Dick a dubsman! What next?' The place of confinement was such as no modern Home Secretary or visiting justices would sanction as fit for the humane custody of even a garrotter. It was a very long cellar, with a brick floor, on which grew rank yellow moss and sickly white fungi, with brick walls, and a roof, the rough joists of which were visible through gaps in the rotten plaster. Light came filtered through four squares of bottle-green glass, protected by a thick grating of rusty iron. This dim skylight window was situated at the top

of a narrow and steeply-alooping aperture, and a second series of iron bars guarded it from access on the part of anything stouter than a weasel. There was but one door to the cellar, and that was the weighty wooden trap that gave entrance to the vault from the back-kitchen of the toll-keeper's house, the same trap which Mrs Brown had lifted when Nicholas and Game Dick had brought in the insensible burden of the stranger's body. This door was secured by two bolts, by the near neighbourhood of a yelping cur, always alive to his duty of barking at unusual noises, and by the vicinity of the Brown family, one of whose members, Nicholas, always slept on a truckle-bed in the little shop. It would have been hardly possible for the cleverest captive to force the trap-door, to pass the dog, and to step over Nicholas Brown's bed undetected.

The inmate of that dismal den had very little light. The winter's day was sadly short to him; the nights were endless in their black darkness. His squalid window, in which the iron bars and the bulls' eyes of the coarse glass obscured half the pale rays, faced eastward; but if day began the earlier on that account, it closed early too. Five hours in murky weather, six or seven when the sky was frostily clear; he could reckon on no more; and that was but a period of modified obscurity, of dim twilight. Eyes not accustomed to the gloom of the subterranean could not have distinguished more than the outline of the prisoner's form. When the self-elected jailer, Nicholas or Game Dick, came down with a supply of food, he brought a candle with him, even at noon; but he left no candle behind him, and the solitary creature below spent the long night in darkness and cold.

He had borne his imprisonment without murmuring. From first to last, those who held him captive had never heard the sound of his voice. Obstinate dumb to questions, however coaxingly or threateningly put, apparently indifferent to hardship, and either answering cuffs and ill-usage by a snarl of animal menace, or sunk in apparent apathy, this strange man had seemed below the level of humanity. Those who had him in charge were desirous to keep him alive for their own ends, and would have given him warmer clothing, better food, anything he asked, liberty excepted, had he but craved for them or shewn signs of illness. But he was silent as an Indian at the torture-stake, and never uttered a syllable of expostulation or complaint, but awaited, with bright, patient eye, whatever might befall him. This conduct bewildered Game Dick, who declared that whether the 'beggar was mortal deep, or green as grass,' he, Richard Flowerdew, could not tell; and for some time Game Dick made frequent irruption, at irregular intervals, into the cellar, examining the iron bars of the window, the trap-door, the face of the prisoner, all in his vague fear of some subtle plan of escape.

But Game Dick tired of this work, and meeting in evil hour with some chums of the thieving tribe, fresh from London, he lent efficient aid in houcussing and robbing a farmer at Heaviton Fair, was apprehended on the premises, and being remarkably well known to the police, was fully committed to take his trial at the assizes. Thus the Browns were left, not a little to their secret joy, to guard the captive, and to secure the lion's

share of the anticipated reward. Nicholas laughed at the idea of their charge's escape. 'The best crackman on the lay couldn't do it,' he said, 'let alone a poor cove like that.'

But Nicholas was unaware of the weight and power of the motives that impelled his prisoner to a display of secretiveness, invention, and self-reliance beyond the conception of vulgar offenders undergoing punishment for crime. Whenever the ruffian entered the cellar—where a smuggler had stowed away his spirit-kegs, newly brought from the sea-coast, long before the turnpike was established—he found the occupant crouched, as in a state of stupid lethargy, on the straw. But had Mr Brown paid a sudden official visit to the vault as the early light came oozing through the window, he would have seen something that would have startled him from his complacent security; he would have seen the prisoner, no longer apathetic, but alert and active, with a terrible earnestness in his wasted face, in the very motion of his bony hands, huddling closer to the window, and beginning to work. Thus—First, stooping down, he touched the heavy irons on his feet, and, as if by magic, they fell with one clank upon the straw. There was no witchcraft in the matter, though—nothing but the magic of industry and dogged determination. With a bit of iron hoop, that had once bound a cask of French brandy, notched by the aid of a crooked nail till it could do duty for a file, the shackles nearest the rings that encircled the prisoner's limbs had been cut through and through. No easy work. It had taken two days to make the file, nine to cut through the fetters, and the workman's hands had been galled and scarred by the imperfect tools, but he had never ceased working, save during those hours when a visit from his jailers might be expected. The iron filings had been heedfully swept away, the shackles wrapt in straw, and tied, so as to keep them apparently intact, and a wisp of straw had been swathed round each of the wearer's ankles, as if to guard them from the painful chafing of the hard metal. The chains were still there, but a touch would snap them.

This was but the needful preliminary of the prisoner's toil. That work of scraping away iron, atom by atom, grain by grain, could be done by night. It was some relief, in the long sleepless hours, to feel that every motion of the file brought the hour of deliverance a little, a very little nearer. But the other needful work required light, and the only available light was that which the sun gave so grudgingly through the dirty panes. It was almost beyond endurance to lie, shivering, between waking and uneasy sleep, through the Egyptian darkness of the night, and to feel the ceaseless gnawing of the one ever-present thought—'Too late! After all that I have planned, done, suffered, the day may come and go, and I may be too late!'

There were times when the desperate wretch was ready to dash out his brains against the walls of his cell; but never in the hours when work was safe, and this was one of them. First, he drew from under his heap of shavings and straw that served him for a bed a fragment of slate, marked with Arabic numerals very neatly cut in it with the point of a nail. This was his record—his almanac. By the aid of this he counted the days as he went on; and at the end of the list, more deeply cut, and larger than the rest, was the figure that repre-

sented a certain day soon to come, a day he had learned by mere accident, after weeks of stealthy listening to every scrap of talk that his guardians let fall as they conversed in the kitchen above. Such conversations rarely occurred, for the back part of the house, beneath which the cellar lay, was but seldom entered, and though one of the gang always stayed beside the trap while another descended into the vault, for fear of some sudden ebullition of fury on the part of their prisoner, it was not often any spoken words that had an interest for the morbidly acute ear that hungered and thirsted for tidings, reached the depths below. But at last, as if by chance, the old woman, with a feminine interest in weddings which age and avarice could not quite banish, had said, as she came to meet her surly son passing up the narrow brick stairs of the cellar, after carrying his food to the inmate of that lair:

'The wedding-day's fixed, it seems; it's to be on the 30th of December. She told me so herself when she gave me the bank-notes, as agreed upon, and'—

But here the massive flap of wood was slammed down and bolted; and the noise of the falling trap, and the harsh grinding of the rusty bolts, drowned the rest of Mrs Brown's speech. Neither the old woman nor her son had any idea that the information which the former had unwittingly conveyed to the imprisoned wretch below would fall as gratefully upon his ear as dew on the parched turf in summer. Now he knew the worst; now he had a definite purpose to work out within a definite period. The joy with which he heard the news was strangely mingled with pain; but he smiled savagely as he finished the list of days he was scratching on the fragment of slate, and cut the numerals that represented the 30th of December deep and deeper than the rest.

'I shall remember that day,' he said between his shut teeth, and as if the words had been engraven on his heart, like the name of lost Calais on that of the dying English queen, he often started from his fitful sleep, and cried out, bitterly: 'The day! the day! I may be too late, too late. Oh, will the morning never come, that I may work, work!'

And he would lie with his eyes fixed on the window far above his reach, waiting for the first cold beams of wintry light, that he might hurry to his self-imposed toil.

His fetters removed, and his little calendar laid by under the straw, the prisoner then produced from some hiding-place a large spike-nail, a short thick piece of wood, and a piece of rusty sheet-iron, all of which lay in the shallow lid of an old basket, and all of which were invaluable to their present owner, as the only instruments at his command. The spike-nail, indeed, sharpened and ground on a loose stone, made a tolerable chisel, such as an artisan would have despised, no doubt, but which to that lonely man was as precious as iron nails had been in the eyes of the rude South-sea islanders when the whites first reached their shores. By its help he had begun a task, the first stages of which were the most arduous and the most liable to detection, a task almost beyond the conception of Game Dick, who had nevertheless broken prison twice during his career of crime.

Listening, like the hare when the hounds are at fault, and she steals, with ears laid back and clotted fur, along the hedgerow, the captive waited motion-

less for a moment, and then, apparently satisfied that no interruption was imminent, began his work. First, some large patches of moss that incrustated the eastern wall were removed, but with as tender care as the most zealous botanist could have shewn in gathering some unique vegetable exotic. That moss was yellow and dry, while the growth elsewhere was green and moist, and no wonder, for it was kept in its place by a tenacious paste of wet clay, artfully concealed beneath the withering tufts. The piece of sheet-iron, which was knife and scoop, and trowel and shovel in one, soon removed the moss, and laid the brick-work bare. Had Game Dick or his partners in rascality chosen to inspect that brick-work, they would not have been much the wiser. The dark-red bricks, the stained mortar, looked exactly like the rest of the cellar-walls; and yet, at the first touch of the spike-nail, out came the mortar, piece by piece, and first one brick, and then another and another, was drawn silently from its place, and ranged on the floor, the chips of dry mortar lying between the bricks to which they belonged, and each of the bricks being laid in regular order, like the parts of a child's puzzle, so that no doubt could exist as to the manner in which they should be replaced when their turn came. Down came brick after brick, until a gaping aperture was left in the wall, large enough to admit a full-grown man on hands and knees. And beyond the brick-work was a dark cavity, whence the marly earth that lay beneath the mould of the widow's garden had been scooped away. Into this cavity the prisoner crawled, like a rat into its hole, and after again listening breathlessly, pursued his work, skilful and patient as a mole in its underground gallery.

His plan of escape was simple in appearance, but its very simplicity was adapted to baffle the cunning of ordinary knaves and ruffians like those in whose power he lay. Had he essayed to file away the window-bars, to saw through the trap-door, to overpower the amateur-jailer who brought him his pittance of food and water, he would probably have failed, and especially while Game Dick was still hanging about the turnpike. But to burrow away out, through earth and wall, was a labour that nothing but the most stubborn resolution, skill, and self-denial could achieve, and no notion of such a danger to their probable gains ever entered the heads of Aurelia's agents. They sincerely believed that their captive's mind was too much clouded for a coherent purpose to take root there.

'The chap was always queer,' Dick had said on the very morning of his own little misunderstanding with Justice on the score of the robbery at Heaviton Fair—'always queer, and that rap you gave him, Nick Brown, has added him quite. You hit him too hard; I said so at the time.'

But the object of their scornful compassion was as intent upon his plan as the wildest statesman on his master-stroke of diplomacy; more so indeed, for his whole being, and hopes, and thoughts were all fused into the one deep engrossing fury of his eagerness. For this he was patient, for this he laboured, for this he watched, counterfeited apathy, kept true to his task. Every handful of earth drawn forth from the bank, every inch gained towards the upper air, brought him nearer to the fulfilment of his project. He worked now as no hireling could have done.

He had chosen the eastern wall, because he heard

twice a day the creaking of the stiff windlass of the garden-well close by. It was so near, that well, that he could hear the dull thumping of the full bucket, as it touched the side of the well in its ascent, and the clank of the chain as the bucket was unhooked. The well lay to the east of the cellar; the distance was short; if he could but tunnel, without discovery, till he reached the well, he should be able to escape. The rope was kept dangling in the shaft of the well; he knew that. His quick ear had never failed to catch the sound of its fall and vibration against the alimy walls. The brick-work of the well once reached, once pierced, he could swing himself up by night, climbing hand over hand, and be free hours before his flight would be known.

But hard as he toiled, carrying away the earth in small loads in his basket-lid, laying it on the floor of the vault, behind a pile of loose bricks and rubbish, which made a convenient screen across one portion of the cellar, stamping it flat, and heaping shavings and brick-dust over the fresh mould, he took a wrong direction, and missed the well after all by a yard or two. But he had pushed his tunnel very near to the surface of the garden itself; he started sometimes when he heard the smothered sound of voices talking overhead, as he bent, with stiffened limbs and cramped fingers, over his toil; and his fear was lest the earth should cave in suddenly, and betray him to his enemies. One more day, two more days would surely suffice. He had been forced of late to take the precaution of propping up the roof of the excavation with such broken bits of board, and old staves of casks, and scraps of rotting poles as he could find among the rubbish in the cellar; but the day—December the 30th—was so very near now. After all that cruel labour and more cruel suspense, if he should fail, after all! He worked for as long as he dared, and then with a sigh crawled out of the pit, and busied himself in replacing, dexterously and rapidly, the portion of the wall which he had removed. Every brick was set in its old place, every piece of mortar fitted into the interstice to which it belonged; a little of the green mould from the dampest part of the vault was rubbed over the cracks; and the moss, carefully moistened with water from the pitcher that stood beside a pie-dish half-full of broken meat, was fixed with clay to the wall where it had once grown rankly. Then the tools were hidden, the shackles were replaced; and the prisoner lay down beneath the frowsy rug, on the straw and shavings, and crouched and cowered like some animal in a cage. He felt the cold, now that he had ceased to work; he shivered, and a dull leaden pallor settled on his face, lately so keen in its expression. It was not more than an hour before noon. Brown would soon come. He came twice a day. Twice a day, or oftener, the captive's labour had to cease till the visit was past.

'It is very cold here, and dark,' he muttered, 'and no friend ever comes. Aurelia!—'

He started as if a serpent had bitten him. All the stupor and dull pain that his pinched face had begun to shew were gone in a moment; his eyes were brilliant, lustrous, full of lurid fire and resolution. He looked down at his hands, which he had begun to chafe, for the sake of warmth, and saw that they bore the marks of his late toil; those stains he effaced as well as he could, and then, after a breathless pause, felt under his clothes for the

belt he wore concealed—yes, it was there still, and the gold pieces were there, safe. His pockets had been emptied when he was first brought in, and his pistols, and his penknife, and his purse had been taken away. There was not much money in the purse—half a sovereign and some silver—but those in whose hands he was were satisfied that he had no more, and did not search him after they had relieved him of what little his pockets contained. He had the belt yet, and money was power. He knew what he had to do. As he had done before, he must lie quite quiet, and look quite stupid, when his ruffian keeper came into the den. He must restrain the homicidal impulse that coursed through his veins like liquid fire, and bear taunts, blows if need be, without a word. The duller and more torpid they thought him, the better. Perhaps he should not miss the 30th of December. One, two more spells of labour would bring him to the upper air. The 30th of December—yes, he bent his aching brain to think fixedly of that. On that day Aurelia was to be married—he must not miss that day.

'I'll tell you what it is, mother,' grumbled Nicholas over his pipe, after his morning visit to the prisoner; 'that caged bird of ours mopes too much, and he'll die soon, and there'll be a pretty piece of work. It'll come out, I tell you—murder always does come out. You may sniggle, but it does. And they'll make it out murder, if we bury him here, and the police get scent of it. I don't want to be scragged, old woman, clever as you think yourself, and I won't be, I swear that;' and the fellow backed the asseveration by a resonant oath, so loud that his mother started and peered round, for fear some one might be standing near the open half-door of the shop, within earshot. There was no one there, however, and Sally was upstairs. The girl generally kept out of the way of her rough uncle, who disliked her, and shewed his sentiments in a practical manner by kicks and pushes when she came near him. His temper was not improved by the drunken habits that grew upon him. Late as it was, he was unshaved, and his untidy breakfast lay in a heap as he had thrust it from him.

'Nick,' said the reputed witch scornfully, 'you're but a chicken-heart after all. My lad beyond seas was worth six such as you. You've been drinking more than you ought overnight; didn't I have to help you in when you came home staggering, and now you've got the horrors, and serve you right. Let me lace your tea for you;' and Mrs Brown extracted a black bottle from a cupboard, and poured into her son's cup something that smelled and looked like gin; 'there, you'll be all right now. We shan't have the chap long. Miss—no need to name names, and besides,' added the hag grinning, 'she'll change hers to-morrow, and be called My Lady—told me only yesterday how she'd found a doctor would take the man away, and not bother us by asking a lot of questions; and he'll come with a carriage next week to fetch him. Drink your tea.'

Nicholas drank his tea. The laced beverage made his blind eyes twinkle. 'We won't part with him—not till we get every penny of the brass, paid down,' said he, smiting the table with his heavy, shaking hand.

'Of course not, ducky!' answered the old woman with a cackling laugh.

But on the day following that on which this colloquy occurred, Nicholas Brown, who had gone stumbling down the cellar-steps to carry food to the prisoner, came rushing up again, with such a storm of execration as drove Sally, frightened, out of the kitchen, and made even his stout-hearted parent shudder.

'What's up, my lad?'

'Gone; given us leg-bail. The bird's flown!' and then came a new volley of oaths. So it turned out. The cellar was empty; but the gap in the wall, and the tunnel burrowed through the earth, remained to shew by what road the captive had gone. Gone he was, and his recapture was unlikely in the extreme. There was no clue to guide the pursuit.

'I wish Game Dick was here!' cried Nicholas, as he stood disconsolate, gazing at the disordered bricks, the yawning excavation, the shackles lying on the cellar-floor, all the signs that their late captive had been more than a match for the craft of his jailers—'I wish Dick was here. I suppose I'd better pad the hoof to Miss there at the Hall, and let her know'—

'Let her know nothing!' resolutely broke in the old woman, who had more presence of mind than her son. 'I know her well. Once say we've lost the bird, and we may whistle for payment. Keep it dark, lad, keep it dark! We may get the money after all, if she thinks the chap's snug with us. Mum's the word.'

So Aurelia received no warning. Her agents, like their employer, thought of their own interest, and of nothing else.

THE NEEDLE.

BRIGHT and busy little thing,
 Busy thing and nimble,
 Popping through the fabric quick,
 Driven by a thimble;
 What a pleasant task is thine,
 Bravely doing duty,
 Carrying the slender thread
 For some working beauty!
 How obedient to the sharp
 Impulse given to thee,
 Idleness might lie abashed
 If he'd turn and view thee.
 Flowers grow around thy point
 In profusion, ampler
 Than beneath a silver shower—
 Witness Mary's sampler!
 What a wondrous thing it is,
 In its nice frame glowing!
 Every shining marvel there
 Thine and Mary's doing.
 Then all honour unto thee,
 Bright, and sharp, and trusty;
 Little silver-shuttle, and
 May you ne'er grow rusty.

All communications to be addressed to 'The Editors of Chambers's Journal, 47 Paternoster Row, London,' accompanied by postage-stamps, as the return of rejected contributions cannot otherwise be guaranteed. Communications should also, in every case, be accompanied by the writer's Christian and surname in full.

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